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DATE: May 1, 2013

TO: Bellevue Transportation Commission

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SUBJECT: Downtown Transportation Plan Update – Transit Passenger Comfort, Access and Information
http://www.bellevuewa.gov/downtown-transportation-plan-update.htm

INTRODUCTION

The update to the Downtown Transportation Plan will address mobility issues and challenges and support Downtown growth and urban livability looking out to 2030.

On May 9, 2013, the Downtown mobility topic will be **Transit Passenger Comfort, Access and Information**. Staff will review proposed transit stop typologies and the related preferred transit stop components.

Downtown Transit Scope of Work

Components of Downtown transit service that are being addressed in the Downtown Transportation Plan Update are as follows:

- **Coverage:** Provide geographically dispersed frequent reliable transit service to enable a short walk distance access to transit for residents, employees and visitors
- **Capacity:** Accommodate buses on Downtown streets and at the Bellevue Transit Center, and transit passengers on transit vehicles and station platforms
- **Speed and Reliability:** Allow for the efficient movement of transit vehicles and passengers through Downtown
- **Passenger Comfort, Access, and Information:** Provide facilities to support transit passengers between the bus or train and their residences, places of employment and other Downtown destinations

Walk-to-Transit Factors

The perception of walk distance and a person's willingness and ability to walk to transit or to other destinations Downtown is related to the quality of the walking environment - the pedestrian infrastructure, roadway traffic speed and volume, and the design and use of the adjacent buildings. Previous work and community outreach for both the Downtown

Transportation Plan and the Downtown Livability Initiative have identified that significant improvements are needed for pedestrians including:

- **Sidewalks:** Provide sidewalks of reasonable width to accommodate anticipated pedestrian volumes and related sidewalk activities (cafe seating, window shopping, etc) plus landscaping (street trees or landscape strip) that provides a buffer from adjacent traffic.
- **Crosswalks:** Establish a hierarchy of crosswalk types that include Standard crosswalks as the default, Enhanced crosswalks where pedestrian volume and traffic speed and volume dictate additional measures are needed to enhance crosswalk function and pedestrian visibility, and Exceptional crosswalks to carry an intended urban design treatment and pedestrian emphasis along a corridor.
- **Mid-Block Crossings:** Identify priority locations for near-term implementation to accommodate existing and anticipated pedestrian demand. Crossings could be at-grade or grade-separated, signalized or unsignalized depending on the need and context.
- **Through-Block Connections:** Provide design, accessibility components and wayfinding that clearly communicate that these connections on private property are public walkways.
- **Wayfinding:** Incorporate pedestrian-oriented freestanding, shelter-mounted, embedded, or electronic wayfinding components. Wayfinding is especially important at transit hubs in the absence of line-of-sight transit connections, and also to provide walk-route guidance to local destinations.
- **Transit stop/station facilities:** Enhance pedestrian access to transit with benches, weather protection, pedestrian-scale lighting, bicycle parking, information, and other components.

TRANSIT PASSENGER COMFORT, ACCESS AND INFORMATION

The bus stop and the light rail station are the pedestrian's connection to the transit system. Information gleaned from Downtown Transportation Plan community involvement and discussions with the Transportation Commission indicates that there may be a deficit of passenger comfort, access and information amenities at Downtown transit stops. These "amenities" are essential components of the transit passenger trip. Lacking these components, a person may be uncomfortable with or unwilling to take the step to become a transit passenger. Staff has consolidated the components into those related to passenger **comfort** at the transit stop, **access** of transit passengers to and from the nearby neighborhood, and the **information** available to passengers at the transit stop. Recognizing that all transit stops are not created equal – that each may serve a different purpose or volume of passengers - staff has developed a set of transit stop "typologies" that categorize various types of transit stops and has also identified a suite of components that may be integrated to each type of transit stop and the immediate vicinity.

Downtown Transit Stop Typologies

A "best practice" analysis, including a look at the Bellevue Transit Master Plan and transit agency standards, has led to the conclusion that transit stops in Downtown Bellevue can be described and categorized in four typologies: the Local Transit Stop; the Primary Transit Stop; the Frequent Transit Network/RapidRide Station; and the Transit Center/Multimodal Hub. These are described briefly as follows:

- **Local Transit Stop**
    - Served by a single transit route with generally 30 boardings or less per weekday
    - At a minimum, a local transit stop would provide a pole-mounted bus stop sign, an ADA standard paved landing pad with access to the sidewalk, a bench, pedestrian scale lighting, and a shelter if boardings warrant
    - Access to the neighborhood is provided via typical urban standard pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- **Primary Transit Stop**
    - Served by one, or more transit routes with service provided at a combined headway of 30 minutes, or better
    - Weekday boardings between 30 and 100 passengers
    - Bus routes may cross at nearby intersections, transfers between routes are common
    - A Primary Transit Stop would include the Local Transit Stop components plus features that support boardings and transfers, such as: passenger shelter; transit route map and transit transfer wayfinding; real time information displays; trash receptacle; and short-term bicycle parking
    - Pedestrian access is supported by Enhanced crosswalk components; nearby mid-block crossing(s); and neighborhood wayfinding
- **Frequent Transit Network/RapidRide Station**
    - Served primarily by RapidRide B, the station may also serve local or regional frequent transit routes, ie) King County Metro Route #271
    - Weekday boardings in the range of 100 to 1,000 passengers
    - A Frequent Transit Network/RapidRide Station would include Primary Transit Stop facilities, plus a sheltered or enclosed passenger waiting area; an Orca Card vending machine, off-board fare payment, and transit transfer information and wayfinding
    - Pedestrian access could include Enhanced or Exceptional crosswalk components, plus mid-block crossing(s) and neighborhood wayfinding
- **Transit Center/Multimodal Hub**
    - Served by multiple transit routes and transit modes (bus, RapidRide, East Link light rail) with a constant flow of transit vehicles and passengers during the day. Weekday boardings exceed 1,000 passengers
    - A Transit Center/Multimodal Hub would include Frequent Transit Network/RapidRide Station facilities, perhaps also a public rest room and "Bike Station" facilities with covered/secure, long-term (commuter) bicycle parking

- Exceptional crosswalk components and generous sidewalks would provide pedestrian access. Roadways would accommodate bicycle access from neighborhoods and regional facilities

IMPLEMENTATION

Several potential implementation strategies may be considered for the development, enhancement and maintenance of transit stops and stations.

- **Transit agency:** King County Metro is upgrading transit stop components and has introduced a suite of signage types to complement shelters.
- **City of Bellevue:** Where the City has desired a transit shelter design that is different than the King County Metro standard, it has been the City's responsibility to construct, install and maintain these shelters. Along Factoria Boulevard, transit shelter design reflects the former industrial character of the site. Until they were replaced with the RapidRide B shelters, those along NE 8th Street had a unique design that included hand painted tiles that matched those on the nearby noise wall.
- **Private developers:** Through the Downtown Livability Initiative, an "amenity incentive" could be proposed as a Downtown code amendment that would give an incentive to a project developer to provide transit stop/station components permanently integrated into the building. Eligibility for the incentive would be contingent on proximity to existing or planned transit stops. The community benefit would be in the form of superior passenger amenities and sidewalks uncluttered by freestanding transit facilities. Potentially eligible components could be enhanced weather protection, seating and wayfinding.
- **Maintenance:** Transit stop maintenance can be supported by sponsorship or advertising or an adopt-a-stop program (this King County Metro Program was curtailed in 2010 but could be revived as resources become available). At South Lake Union Streetcar stations, for example, discrete signage identifies station sponsorship. At Chicago Transit Authority facilities, and in other cities, panel advertisement on shelters provides supplemental resources for maintenance.

NEXT STEPS

Staff is beginning to review the policies, existing conditions, opportunities and constraints regarding Downtown on-street parking. Under the umbrella of this topic are other curb-side uses such as freight/parcel loading zones, taxi stands, passenger pick-up/drop-off, and parking metering. Discussion and preliminary recommendations for on-street parking will be brought to the Commission in June.